



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **“Peaceoholic” Mentor Sentenced to Six Years in Prison for Sexual Assault of 15-year-old Spingarn Student**

WASHINGTON – Today, a 50-year-old Oxon Hill, MD man, Barry Harrison, was sentenced in D.C. Superior Court to 6 years of imprisonment, after having been found guilty in September by a jury of three counts of Second Degree Child Sexual Abuse with aggravating circumstances, one count of Enticing a Minor with aggravating circumstances, and one count of Misdemeanor Child Sexual Abuse with aggravating circumstances, for the April 14, 2009 assault on a 15-year-old student at Spingarn Senior High School in Northeast Washington.

Harrison was sentenced by Superior Court Judge Michael L. Rankin to 72 months of incarceration for each of the counts of Second Degree Child Sexual Abuse, 36 months for Enticing a Minor, and 180 days for Misdemeanor Child Sexual Abuse. Additionally, Harrison will have to register as a sex offender for 10 years following his release. Judge Rankin ordered that the sentences be served concurrently with one another. Harrison, who committed these offenses while on parole for a 1984 Murder, also faces additional incarceration for violation of that parole.

The government’s evidence at trial established that the defendant had been assigned as a mentor to Spingarn Senior High School by a community group called “Peaceoholics, Inc.” That group, staffed largely by ex-offenders, provided mentoring services to at-risk students in several D.C. Public High Schools. Prior to the offense, the defendant made several sexually suggestive statements to the victim, as well as to three other girls who were also Spingarn students. The defendant told one of the other students, who testified at trial, that he wanted to speak with her privately where they could not be seen by school surveillance cameras. On April 14, 2009, the defendant told the 15-year-old victim that he needed to speak to her. The defendant took the victim to a basement stairwell of the school that lacked a surveillance camera. There, the defendant grabbed the victim’s buttocks, pulled her up against his body and forced her hand to touch his erect penis. The victim ran away and immediately reported the incident.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Phillips commended several officers of the Metropolitan Police Department, including Detective Linda Knight and Investigator William G. Talbert III, Officers Sylvester Jackson, Alfred Stewart, Wallace Cash, and Sergeant Zenobia McBride. Finally, U.S. Attorney Phillips thanked Larry Grasso of the Intelligence Section of the U.S. Attorney's Office, Paralegal Jason Manuel, Victim Witness Advocate Iris Vega, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward A. O'Connell who investigated, indicted and tried the case.

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